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Acting Executive
THRU: Joint Training Committee
Management Officer

21 September 1950

Management Staff Study of Assessment Unit, Training Division.

1. A Management Staff study of the Assessment Unit, Training Division, conducted intermittently during the months of July and August 1950 has revealed several basic problems which require immediate attention. It should be noted that certain organizational and staffing difficulties stemming from these basic problems prompted the request for a Management study.

2. While the original intent of the Management study was to simplify the internal procedures and work method employed in the internal operations of the Assessment Unit, it became apparent quite early that the scope of the study must be extended to include investigation into concepts and outside influences bearing on the operations of the Assessment Unit. Consequently, discussions were also held with Chief, Training Division, Chief, Staff II, OPC, Deputy Executive, Office of Special Operations, Deputy Chief, Special Support Staff, and Chief, Employees Division, Special Support Staff. All expressed the opinion that Assessment, if judiciously administered, can be a valuable adjunct to CIA personnel activities.

3. The basic problems in the assessment activity stem from four major failings:

a. Failure to consider administrative feasibility in developing program plans. Probably, more plans, both short-term and long-range, have been formulated for the assessment activity than for any other activity in CIA of comparable size and organizational level. While one of the primary principles of sound management is "planning", in this instance the contradictions arising in reconciliation of such plans with each other and with operational experience tend to confuse rather than to clarify the role of the Assessment Unit. For example:

(1) In a plan for the Assessment Unit presented to the Training Division Policy Committee, dated 27 June 1950, it was proposed that T/O provision be made for a staff of 57 of which 44 positions would be filled by psychologists. In contrast, in a memorandum, dated 3 April 1950, to the Training Division Policy Staff, the

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Chief, Assessment Unit related the comprehensive efforts he had made to recruit psychologists for two existing vacancies of a T/O of six, but with no success.

(2) In a memorandum prepared for the Office of Policy Coordination in January 1949, the Chief of the Assessment Unit indicated that one psychologist could assess five senior official candidates per week or 10 junior candidates per week or 20 clerical candidates per week. Assuming that all assessment candidates are senior officials, which they are not, it would follow that a staff of six psychologists could assess 30 candidates per week. However, in a memorandum to the Chief, Training Division, dated 27 June 1950, it was indicated that a staff of six psychologists "could handle a maximum of 16 cases per week, assuming that all members of the staff are on duty."

(3) The expansion of the assessment activity is based on a proposed expansion of the Office of Policy Coordination. If the difficulties in recruiting psychologists set forth in paragraph 3a(1), above, exist, can an assessment staff be recruited and trained (Chief, Assessment Unit indicated that six months to two years is required to train a psychologist) to meet OPC needs?

(4) The projected assessment workload is based primarily on OPC's hiring policies which make assessment mandatory for all candidates GS-12 and above. It is noted that the Office of Special Operations refers candidates for assessment on a much more selective basis. Thus, it becomes apparent that no Agency policy has been established as to the type of candidates to be referred for assessment. Likewise, it should be indicated that OPC has not fully considered the administrative feasibility of implementing such a policy.

(5) The purposes for which assessment should be utilized have not been clearly defined. Presently, candidates are referred to obtain data on the individual for purposes of:

- (a) employment:
- (b) placement and reassignment:
- (c) psychological diagnosis when evidences of neuroses have been found; and

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(d) individual guidance and counseling.

Also, no uniform pattern has been established regarding the stage in the hiring or placement process that assessment should take place. An Agency policy reflecting these considerations will greatly influence the workload of and work procedures employed in the Assessment Unit.

b. Failure to related the organizational placement of the Assessment Unit to other personnel functions. Organizational-ly, the Assessment Unit appears to operate autonomously without specific supervision. While administratively attached to the Training Division, the substantive program differences have exempted this activity from substantive supervision. The only supervision given has been when the Chief of the Assessment Unit has turned to the Training Division Policy Committee or one of its members for policy support for his plans or operations. This freedom has permitted this Unit to deal directly with Division Chiefs on assessment cases and has resulted in participation of the Assessment Unit in activities outside of its cognizance to the detriment of the assessment program. On the other hand, although assessment is one facet of the personnel function, only formal exchange exists between the Assessment Unit and the Special Support Staff.

c. Failure to integrate the Assessment Program with other related programs.

(1) Evaluations of candidates for employment are made by three other organizational segments of the Agency.

(a) The Test Standards Training Branch of the Personnel Division, Administrative Staff, administers intelligence and ability tests to all persons GS-9 and below making application to CIA. It is possible that this testing service might be useful to the Assessment Staff. Presently, neither staff is aware of the work program of the other and the Chiefs of these activities have never met.

(b) The Inspection and Security Staff subjects an applicant to a thorough security investigation. The results of neither the security investigation nor the polygraph are available to the Assessment

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Staff, and apparently no effort has been made to utilize these findings.

(c) The placement officers of the Special Support Staff have also evaluated the candidate's qualifications for the proposed assignment and have the responsibility for referring candidates to vacancies. Yet, Special Support Staff has no knowledge of assessment action until two weeks after an assessment report has been rendered.

(2) Moreover, generally-accepted Agency criteria for evaluating traits and characteristics required for incumbents of CIA covert positions have not been developed for evaluations required in the placement, training, or operating phases. Vague and limited instructions are given to the Assessment Unit by the division officials requesting assessment action. The assessment psychologists themselves to a large extent determine what is required to do the job. (Likewise, each other evaluator exercises his own judgment as to criteria to be employed in the evaluation.) Clearly-defined, generally accepted criteria could rule out many candidates prior to assessment and referral for divisional interviews, thus saving considerable staff time. Also, it would prove invaluable in evaluating subsequent job performance.

(3) The present assessment rejection rate is about 30 per cent. This high rejection rate is a reflection on the recruitment activities of the Agency, or indicates improper assessment direction, or both. A close integration of all facets of the recruitment process should improve this activity to the extent that the rejection rate of assessment could be considerably lowered.

d. Failure to recognize and to establish appropriate safeguards against known criticisms of previous assessment organizations. Perhaps the most bitter charge leveled against assessment by previous senior Agency officials is that it becomes an end in itself and exerts undue influence on the personnel activities of the Agency. If assessment is recognized as the "last word", and if the assessment officials can be persuaded, innocently or otherwise, to be influenced by office politics, then, assessment is in a position to control the success or failure of Agency operations. Appropriate controls must be established to insure that these previous errors are not repeated. While this problem does not appear to be serious at the present time,

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the Chief, Assessment Unit, stated that some division officials have referred candidates for assessment for the purpose of overriding objections to employment interposed by the placement officers of the Special Support Staff.

4. Within the course of the study, approximately 100 assessment reports were reviewed and 20 assessment folders were examined. Certain cases were discussed with the psychologists to determine the scope of assessment action. While lack of professional training in psychology on the part of the Management analyst precluded criticism of the psychological processes employed in the operation, certain questionable factors relating to work methods and scope of function reflected in the assessment process were noted.

a. In some cases, factors outside the apparent jurisdiction of the assessment process were emphasized, such as whether the candidate is a good security risk, or whether the candidate is professionally qualified for the position. Likewise, factors outside the scope of the position were presented as reasons for failing the assessment. For example, it was reported that the candidate could do the job, but could not pass the training course prescribed for the job.

b. A desire to accommodate the requester was also noted, especially in cases referred for reassignment purposes. While all tests showed poor scores, the report concluded that the employee has passed the assessment.

c. When the request for assessment indicated only one or two factors to be considered, a candidate with generally excellent scores was rejected on the basis of one factor. For example, if motivation for the job was found to be for personal aggrandizement, an otherwise excellent candidate would be rejected.

d. The placement function was often infringed on by recommendations as to the grade level at which the candidate should be hired and by recommendations that the candidate be employed elsewhere, usually ORE. One candidate with an unsatisfactory work record and generally poor score was recommended for assignment as a management analyst to make routine management surveys.

e. In the course of the assessment, the candidate was asked to repeat in writing information already available on his form 57 or PHS.

f. The time of qualified psychologists was used to administer objective written tests, which task could be adequately performed

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by a lower grade test administrator with psychological training sufficient to report the reactions of the testees to the various tests.

g. The personnel papers on the candidate often were not made available to the psychologist until after the candidate had reported for testing.

h. The assessment reports contained some repetitive and seemingly unnecessary information. For example, the proposed assignment was indicated at the top of the report and again in the body of the report. Information contained in the form 57 was repeated in the report. Also, the thinking process of the psychologist which included setting-forth the personal history of the candidate was included. While such data is valuable to the candidate when the assessment is used for counseling and guidance, it is of little use to the hiring official unless he himself is a psychologist and can follow the interpretation. In fact, it may even confuse the hiring official if no firm conclusion is presented.

i. Standard psychological procedure prescribes the utilization of two or more psychologists for each assessment to neutralize the subjective opinions resulting from the contact of the personalities of the psychologist and the candidate. Until more scientific psychological methods are found, it appears that this duplicate effort must probably continue.

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j. Considerable time is consumed within the Assessment Unit in conferring on, reviewing, and rewriting assessment reports. In many cases, the review and purpose of rewrite appeared to be rhetorical, rather than substantive.

k. While it has been stated that this Unit as presently staffed can handle only 8 to 10 cases per week, during one week of the survey, it was noted that the staff handled 25 cases.

l. The utilization of instructors from the Training Staff to assist in group screenings suggests that means other than a greatly expanded assessment unit may exist by which the Office of Policy Coordination recruitment and placement effort may be facilitated. This is vitally important in view of the time factor.

5. The administration of the Assessment Unit leaves much to

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be desired. Perhaps, the greatest fault is the lack of proper supervision of the Unit as a whole which was discussed in paragraph 3b above. Other deficiencies noted follow:

a. The additional staff requested by the Chief, Assessment Unit, does not reflect the true workload of the Unit and gives undue emphasis to clerical support, at the expense of the substantive program.

b. There is considerable dispersion of effort. The Staff of this unit, particularly the Chief, has expended energies in many activities outside the jurisdiction of this unit. These include:

(1) Recruitment of psychologists and other officials for OPC activities.

(2) Participation in operational planning for OPC activities.

(3) Conferring with officials on placement problems.

(4) Counseling and guiding problem employees.

c. No uniform procedure or control was employed in the referral of candidates for assessment. Thus, no firm assessment schedule can be developed and no preliminary planning for the assessment can be undertaken.

d. The administrative activities have not been properly organized so that confusion can often result, e.g., two instances of misplaced papers within one month were indicated by memoranda in the correspondence file.

e. Administrative implementation of new projects and changes was initiated before clearances and approvals were obtained or before sufficient staff was available to handle the project, e.g., passports and medical clearances were requested for all presently employed psychologists, although the proposed project had not as yet been submitted to the National Security Council and no provision had been made to carry on the assessment activity in Washington.

f. Poor morale among the employees, particularly the professional staff, was noted. This appeared to be due to in large part very critical supervision, the chaotic environment, and underutilization of professional talents.

g. The autonomous nature of the Assessment Unit and a proclivity to expand operations beyond capacity to absorb

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has caused an unnecessarily heavy clerical workload. Little dependence is placed on the facilities of the Administrative Unit of the Training Division and there appeared to be little or no control over supply procurement requests initiated by this Unit. For example, purchase orders were initiated for the purchase of over 300 books for use by the Assessment Unit. The small size of the Assessment Staff and the limited space available to it makes this type of action appear ludicrous. It was noted that some of the titles, which ranged through all fields of personnel, management, sociology, and related subjects, are presently available to the CIA library located in the Office of Collection and Dissemination. Other examples of questionable workload are:

- (1) Maintenance of 37 file safes of the Office of Strategic Services assessment reports and current holdings.
- (2) Separate maintenance of expandable supplies.
- (3) Preparation of travel orders and reimbursement vouchers.
- (4) Maintenance of files of OSO and OPC internal regulations.

h. Test scoring represents one of the most critical work factors in the program. Present procedures require about two hours of scoring time per candidate. Only hand scoring methods are employed. However, the Assessment Unit is presently renting an IBM scoring machine at a cost of \$60 per month, which is not being used. There were indications that the employee responsible for scoring is averse to using the machine and no effort has been made to remedy the situation.

i. Approximately one hour of stenographic time is required to take dictation, prepare a draft and then retype a final copy of a narrative assessment report. When a form is used for reports, the same job can be performed in ten minutes if the stenographer receives a hand-written draft of the form.

6. In view of the above-stated findings, it is recommended that:

a. All future plans for the expansion of the Assessment activity be cleared with the Chief, Special Support Staff, to determine the administrative feasibility of the plan and he indicate the estimated time required to implement the plan, before such requests are referred to the Executive or to one of the Staffs reporting to him.

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- b. OPC requirements for assessment be adjusted to current and projected staffing status of the Assessment Unit.
- c. Agency policy be promulgated by the Joint Training Committee, in conjunction with the Special Support Staff, and approved by the Executive as to type of candidates to be referred to assessment, purposes for which assessment is to be used, and the stage at which assessment should be included in the placement procedure.
- d. The Assessment activity be governed by such policy as is promulgated and its activities be strictly limited to those duties specified in the policy.
- e. Assessment Unit be organizationally placed in the Employees Division of the Special Support Staff, and the activities of this Unit be strictly supervised by the Chief of that Division. The assessment program be fully integrated with other like agency activities through the Chief of the Special Support Staff and maximum utilization be made of these other Agency facilities in the assessment process.
- f. A staff study be initiated by Chief, Special Support Staff, to develop in conjunction with interested staffs or the Office of Policy Coordination, Training Division, and the Office of Special Operations, a standard generally accepted list of traits and characteristics required for specific operational jobs in the field. Each item on such a list should be clearly defined and the list should be circulated to all interested persons to permit uniform thinking in the rendition of evaluations.
- g. The Chief of the Special Support Staff should establish appropriate controls to safeguard against the misuse of the assessment function. Limiting the assessment finding to an evaluation of traits and characteristics without a recommendation as to hiring or placement action might provide one type of check.
- h. The procedures employed in substantive phases of the assessment activity be purified to exclude overlap with other activities and to eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort.
- i. A form for reporting assessment findings which can be used both as a worksheet and as a final report be adopted. A possible sample is attached as Exhibit A.

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j. Internal review of assessment reports be confined to purely substantive issues.

k. The feasibility of group screening be further explored and utilized wherever practicable.



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m. The psychologists be freed from test administration duties and be accorded full professional recognition, if capable, or otherwise be relieved from their assignments on the Assessment Staff.

n. The Special Support Staff placement officers schedule the assessment cases and insure that Assessment receives the proper personnel papers at least 24 hours prior to date of assessment.

o. The Administrative Officer organizationally available to the Assessment Unit accept greater responsibility for such support. We will discuss this matter with appropriate officials at such time as a decision has been made as to the organizational location of the Assessment Unit.

p. The Assessment Unit and Special Support Staff take immediate steps to lighten the clerical workload by:

(1) Establishing a central expendable supply room for building 13 and 14 or by utilizing the new order form for requesting such supplies.

(2) Provide a vault area for housing the Assessment Unit files.

(3) Eliminate maintenance of files of OSO and OPC administrative regulations, and any other not pertinent to their mission.

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(4) Cease overall consolidation of OSS files with CIA files, effecting such consolidation only at the time a former OS employee is reassessed.

q. Assessment Unit provide for the daily use of the IBM test scoring machine or return such machine to the IBM Corporation unless the Training Division can show need for it. (Mr. Morris will follow.)

7. The above report may appear to be a harsh indictment of the present Assessment Unit and its Chief. However, the lack of adequate supervision and the unbounded enthusiasm of the Chief, Assessment Staff for his assignment must be considered. Further, this staff feels there is a definite need for assessments, but unless such a staff has a clear mission and goal and proper organizational assignment and control, we stand to lose as much or more than we gain.

JAMES D. ANDREWS

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

1 August 1951

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